

## A Challenge of Catholic Universities :

### *A Reflection on Their Role as Institutions for Formation and Transformation of the Human World*

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カトリック大学の挑戦：  
人間社会の形成と変革のための  
機関としてのカトリック大学の役割と、「人間学」の意義について

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大学の成立基盤がカトリック（キリスト教）にあるということは何を意味するのか。本論は「古典主義世界観」と「歴史意識に基づく世界観」の違いについての理解を出発点として、「存在物の同一性とその成り立ちの変化」について、また、「人間認識における発見の構造と信用の構造との相互関係」について問いを進め、カトリック大学ゆえに可能となる独自の教育と社会的役割、そして、「キリスト教学」と共にその教育の根幹となる「人間学」とはどのようなものであるかを考察する。

### 1. Introduction

On May 19th, 1986, at the commencement of Boston College, Bernard Cardinal Law, Archbishop of Boston, gave a short address as his blessing for graduating students. Excerpt of his address is as follows. “ [If the Catholic university] ever sees the secular university as its model, it forfeits its right to exist as a unique institution . . . . . My prayer is for Boston College ever more clearly Catholic . . . . . A Catholic university should be an institution unambiguous in its full assent in faith to the life giving, saving truth that is revealed in the Word made Flesh, Jesus Christ, and communicated in the teaching of the church . . . . . [The university's dialogue with non-Catholics must never come] at the expense of the truth we serve. . . . . I pledge

my prayers and my help in ensuring that your Catholic identity might never be lost . . . . .”

Concerning this address many responses have been enlivening articles, editorials and the column of letters to the editor of local newspapers. Although Cardinal did not say much because of the time limitation, responses to his address went beyond what he actually said and it was as if his address became a lightning rod for voices concerning the issues which are implied or associated with his address. In this sense, it seems appropriate to say that the Cardinal's address provided us a good opportunity to reflect on the issues which have rarely been treated in a way that heightens our awareness to ask explicit questions about them.

Major issues which respondents to Cardinal's address seem to have taken for granted are the authenticity of being Catholic, the role of Catholic universities and the proposed Vatican regulations about Catholic universities in the United States in which the Vatican is proposing that the principles of Catholic doctrines be faithfully observed and that all teachers of theology be required to have a license, or mandate from church authorities, the local bishop or the Vatican. In this paper, I attempt to reflect on those issues in hopes of attaining a possibly creative understanding on the interrelationship among 'the meaning of authenticity,' 'the role of Catholic universities,' and 'Catholic education in general.'

## **2. What does “Being an Authentic Catholic” Mean ?**

### **(i) Influence of Presuppositions**

What draws my immediate attention in Cardinal's address given this time and his speeches made in the past concerning the meaning and role of (Catholic) universities, and in audiences' responses to his address is the ambiguity of several words which seem to constitute the kernel of the arguments. When the speaker does not give detailed and unambiguous definitions of words which are of central import in his speech, listeners are obliged to interpret the speech with their own definitions of those words. When the listeners define the words, they do so according to their own world views, presuppositions and emphases and rarely take notice of this fact. As a consequence, there appear as many ways of interpretation of one speech as there are listeners, an example of which is observed in the variety of responses to Cardinal Law's address.

Some may object that Christians have one and the same world view and therefore there is virtually no possibility of different understandings of the same speech. In terms of the goal we aim at, most of us Christians agree, roughly speaking, with one another. However, it is other presuppositions that are more at stake when we interpret someone's statement in which central words are not above all ambiguity. So as for us to avoid misunderstandings caused by the difference in terms of definitions of the words and to become aware of the significance and difficulty of defining words, therefore, it might be helpful to make explicit what kind of definition, in general, is derived from what kind of presupposition and to see how different understandings might appear, in the concrete, from one short address Cardinal Law made because of the difference of various presuppositions.

## (ii) Two Kinds of Questions

There are two kinds of questions concerning one's being a Catholic. The first kind is *whether* a person is a Catholic or not. The second one asks *what* it means to be an authentic Catholic. The first kind of question is concerned with the presence or absence of one's assent to what the Catholic church has handed down. To answer this question is not hard at all in usual cases. The answer to this questions is "yes" or "no." If someone is asked, "Are you a Catholic?", and answers affirmatively without any hesitation, the reason for his giving an affirmative answer usually comes from the fact that his name is on the member list of the Catholic church. This question may be compared to the question asking one's nationality. "Are you a citizen of the United States of America?" The answer will be, "Yes," or "No." There can exist no ambiguity between "Yes," and "No," unless those who are asked this question are currently involved in the process of immigration or emigration. Taking the above into consideration, the intention of the Cardinal's address, "Be Catholic!", does not seem to be directed to this first kind of question concerning the presence or absence of names on the member list of the Catholic church. For since the majority of faculty and students, at least of Boston College, are Catholic, it does not make sense for him to urge them, who are already Catholic, to become Catholic.

The first kind of question, however, becomes totally another question when a word, "authentic," is added to it. "Are you an 'authentic' Catholic?" Many of those who are asked this question will become puzzled for a while, I presume. In order for the difference between questions, "Are you Catholic?" and "Are you an 'authentic' Catholic?"

Catholic?", to be recognized, our minds have to be differentiated to distinguish "how we *are* now" from "how we *should be*." And as long as we are aware of our sinfulness, we notice, even if not in an explicit way, the difference and realize that to answer the question, "Are you an authentic Catholic?", we need to know what an authentic Catholic is like. Then, this question leads to the second kind of question: what it means to be an authentic Catholic.

The second kind of question is not so simple and clear-cut. It aims at explanation about constitutive elements which make the Catholic church the Catholic church. Some say that to be an authentic Catholic means not to miss any obligation the Catholic church requires us to observe. Some may enumerate doctrines the Catholic church has been holding and say that authentic Catholics must know about all of them. Others try to define the meaning of being an authentic member of the Catholic church by describing how Catholics behaved in the past two millennia.

It will be easily agreed that in whatever way we try to answer this question, none of us can exhaust all possible answers. Some will say that being an authentic Catholic means such and such, but there always remains room for others to say that being an authentic Catholic is more than that. This does not mean that answers to the second kind of question are relative to person, place or time. Absolutely not. Rather that the meaning of being an authentic Catholic *grows* as time goes on. 'Growth' is not the same as 'change,' although the former includes the latter. 'Growth' presupposes the identity, unity and whole of what grows, whereas 'change' does not. My little nephew named, 'Sekai,' cannot be recognized, by those who have not seen him for ten years, to be the same boy they used to carry in their arms. Being shown a picture of Sekai which was taken recently, those who have not seen him since his birth would express their surprise in such exclamatory sentences as, "Is this the same Sekai I know?" His mother would answer, "Yes, he is the same Sekai, although his facial features have changed a lot and he has outgrown the clothes you gave him ten years ago."

### **(iii) "Does the Catholic Church Grow?": Two World Views**

Does the Catholic church grow? There will be different answers depending on one's understanding about the nature of the human world. There are two kinds of views about the human world, the study of the difference of which is of great significance today. There are the *classicist's* view and the view of the human world based on the *historical consciousness*. If one thinks that there exists one ideal and normative

culture, after which all other human cultures should model, and also sets up the 'ideal and normative' culture in the 'past,' he will regard anything new and not found in the normative culture to be the result of deviation from the norm and not to be allowed to exist. Using the term of one of our contemporary theologians let me call this kind of view about the human culture, the 'classicist's view.' According to the classicist's view, there should be neither change nor growth in the human world. It is very rare for us to meet pure classicists in our daily life. The chances are that the majority of us are classicists concerning things 'the status quo' or 'the status quo ante' of which is comfortable and convenient for us even though it is not for others. For classicist Catholics, to grant anything new in the church is out of the question. For them, to be Catholic means to do and act according to the normative models which existed, they think, somewhere and sometime in the past. According to classicists, my nephew Sekai would have to wear the clothes given to him ten years ago.

The classicist's view of the human world has its ground in Aristotle's cosmology. The value and contribution of Aristotle's works can never be overestimated, but some part of his philosophy has been recognized, in the past four centuries, to be in need of revision. It is so called 'historical consciousness' that came to replace Aristotle's view of the human world. Those who view the world of human beings as 'historical' *distinguish* (not separate) the world of human beings from the world of nature. Things in the world of nature do not depend for their existence on human understandings, whereas the world of human beings is constituted by human understandings. What does this mean? Examples may be more helpful than explanation.

We call particles which are constituted by hydrogen and oxygen by the ratio two of the former to one of the latter 'water,' or technically 'H<sub>2</sub>O.' Water began to exist not because man wished it. It has been existing since before man recognized its existence or began to wonder about its nature, and its constitutive ratio of hydrogen and oxygen did not and will not change after man understands its nature. Man can utilize water, but water exists without man and with its constitutive elements rarely changed.

On the contrary, 'human things,' such as school, church, nation, custom, law, politics, business, art, etc. depend for their existence always on human beings, more specifically, on human understandings. As human understandings advance, grow, develop, or go astray, become distorted, recede, 'human things' or 'things in the world of human beings' come to existence, develop, grow, or degrade, perish. This is what

it means that human beings are 'historical.' Water is not historical because the existence of it does not depend on human understandings and the nature of it is not subject to changes in human understandings. What is fire? Aristotle thought that fire is 'one of the four elements' that compose everything that exists. In the eighteenth century, Aristotle's answer was replaced by the phlogiston theory, which is usually associated with Joseph Priestley, the last person who supported this theory. According to this theory, fire is the process of 'dephlogistication.' Then A. L. Lavoisier criticized this theory and explained that fire is 'oxidization.' The point is that fire kept burning while understandings of the nature of fire kept changing. This is not the case with regard to human things. When understandings of the nature of them change, the nature of those things change, too. How about 'school'? School at a time of Aristotle is not exactly the same as that in the twentieth century. The role, intention, size of the institution, the characteristics of teachers and students have shifted according to the shift of human understandings of its nature.

What this difference between natural things and human things indicates is the need of different (but related) ways of treating each kind of thing. It is inappropriate and impossible to treat human things with the method used in the field of natural sciences and vice versa. For example, behaviorists' approach to children is a typical example of the confusion between natural things and human things.

Not that study in the field of human sciences cannot be related to study in the field of natural sciences. It is indispensable and possible that they are related to each other. But it becomes possible only when we understand the difference between and what is common in the study of both human sciences and natural sciences.

The nature of what is understood becomes influenced not only by 'how' human beings understand something but also by the difference of the circumstances and presuppositions of those who understand, as I mentioned above. Let us take marriage as an example here. The institution of marriage began to exist not simply because human beings came to existence in this world but rather because analyses or understanding about the nature of human life made them intend to set up a certain system concerning the relationship between men and women and name it marriage. Since the human relationship differs from culture to culture, from time to time, meanings given to it vary from culture to culture, from time to time. The meaning of marriage in certain African tribes is different from that of the United States, because the modes of human relationship differ and understandings of them differ. What young people in

the twentieth century America think about marriage is not exactly the same as what their great-grand parents thought of it. Why? Because, again, the mode of human relationship changed and understandings of what constitutes marriage changed.

What becomes important in this context is *not* to judge, as classicists are hasty in doing, which notion of marriage is good and which is bad, which is primitive and which is advanced, which is sophisticated and which is barbarian, which is normal and which is abnormal, *but* to notice, first of all, *the fact **that** they are different*, and to try to understand **how** and **why** they are different from one another. Relativists ('Historicists' are relativists, but historicists are to be distinguished from those who are 'historically conscious.') recognize **that** they are different but fall short of asking **how** and **why**. Relativists would say that there are only changes but not growth or development because there is nothing such as identity. The historically minded recognize **that** they are different and at the same time that the human world consists of human things which keep their identity, unity and whole, and which thence grow, develop, decline, perish according to the shift of human understandings of the nature of them. And they try to know the entire picture of the human world especially in terms of the relationship among every component which constitutes each human thing in the past.

#### (iv) Unity-Identity and Changes

Let me go back to the question I asked in the beginning of this section : Does the Catholic church grow? Otherwise put, this question asks whether a human thing ('*thing*,' in this context is a technical word defined as '*a particular unity, identity and whole of a set of data, which is grasped as an answer to a question*' and is contrasted with '*body*, which is *the object of the biological consciousness*') called Catholic church has been *undergoing **changes*** but has *retained its own **unity-identity*** through the changes. The point we have to pay careful attention with about this question is that 'changes' and 'unity-identity' of one thing do not contradict each other. The confusion on this point leads to typical misunderstanding of the nature of the human world exemplified by classicists and relativists. Classicists admit that there are changes in this world, but since things, in their understanding, consist of 'essential parts,' which are not subject to any change and 'accidental parts,' which do change, they try to classify what is essential in the Catholic church and what is not, and to say that the essential parts do not change and should not even be thought to be changeable. When

asked the question, whether the Catholic church grows, therefore, classicists would answer, "Yes. But what changes is not an 'essential' part of the church. There should be no change in anything 'central' in the church, and the 'essential parts' of the church at any age at any place should be exactly the same as it has been." Relativists, who have less grasp about the source of identity-unity of things than their emphasis about changes they observe in this world, would say, "Because everything is relative and drifting around and since there is no direction or criteria, it is impossible to tell whether the Catholic church grows or not."

Those who view the human world as historical would say, "Yes. The Catholic church has grown and developed in the past centuries, because what constitutes this church has undergone various kinds of change but at the same time its unity and identity has been retained."

Some may make an objection to what I have been writing, and ask, "Is the Catholic church a 'human' thing, and not 'divine'?" The Christian church began to exist because God took the initiative of founding this community and God has been working in the midst of the growth of his church. Without the Word of God having come to the world, there would have been no Christian church. There is neither change nor growth in God, in the eternal truth in His mind. However, members of His church, the Body of Christ, are not God. No matter how blessed, graceful, or sacred believers are, still they are human beings, who are endowed with the freedom to make mistakes. Church is a 'human thing,' even though it is based on and sustained by divine grace and providence.

The most important point in terms of which those who are historically conscious differ from classicists is that, according to the former, all the elements that constitute the Catholic church are change-*able* without the Catholic church losing its identity, while, according to the latter, there is a part that is not subject to any change. According to the historically minded, therefore, it is impossible to point out a certain dimension in a particular age and particular place in the past and say that it is what the Catholic church is and should be, just as it is impossible to tell what a certain movie is like by showing a frame of film cut out of the entire movie. In order to know what the Catholic church is we have to do serious study about what has been going forward among those who claimed to be believers in the Catholic church in the past two millennia. Serious historical study means not to pick up only positive actions made by Catholics, but to investigate both negative and positive aspects in the past, to try to



understand the dynamically and dialectically related process of various actions, to evaluate what and which actions were authentic and unauthentic in the entire perspective of the past and to seek after what actions we should do right at this moment and in the future on the basis of what we learn from the past. What then are the criteria to distinguish what is authentic from what is not, for the historically minded? To this question let me come back in the end of this article.

To ask what it means to be an authentic Catholic is similar to asking how to win a chess game. The winning key is the player's ability to critically analyze all the moves he and his opponent have made up to the present. The likelihood of winning the game depends on how far back and how precisely he can analyze and reflect the relationship among each move of every piece he and his opponent have already made. Likewise, it is only after adequate study of the past that it becomes possible, even in a limited extent, to say what it means to be an authentic Catholic.

#### **(v) Meanings, Expressions, and Understanding**

Some might say that what the Catholic church is or what the Christian message is is all written in the Bible. Read the Bible, and you will know everything about authentic Christians. This kind of opinion is brave but at the same time a little too naive. It is certainly true that the Bible is the foundation of the Christian church, but understanding what the Bible says is not a one day job. To understand the divine mystery, the door to which is the Bible, has been the long time job by generations of believers, and there will be no ending of this task. Also, no matter how precious and fundamental the Bible is for us, the Bible is a product of a particular time and place in human history and it becomes imperative for its readers to take it for granted that the Bible is historically conditioned, and that the meanings expressed in it can be grasped only when we treat seriously the particular historical surroundings in which it was written. This does not deny that the Bible is the Word of God. The Word of God is eternal truth. True. However, it was expressed in human language, which is historically conditioned. Languages change, and meanings expressed in them change, too. The eternal truth in God's mind is changeless, but its carriers are subject to ceaseless change. Since the tools, one of which is language, to express the divine truth are historically conditioned and human intellectual ability is limited, it is unlikely that all that the Bible says is always obvious to everybody.

Meanings and expressions are not to be confused.  $5 + 2 = 7$ .  $101 + 10 = 111$ .

V + II = VII. **Meanings** in these three operations are the same, while **expressions** differ. "Good morning" and "Ohayoo" (The literal translation of this word in English would be "your are early.") carry the same meaning but express the *same* meaning *differently* according to the different circumstances. Translation means not simply to find the equivalent words or sentences of one language in another, but more importantly to understand the **relationship** between what is expressed in one language and the culture in which the language is functioning, and to transpose that **relationship** in the context of another language and culture. Unless this point is adequately understood, we are very likely to repeat the same kind of mistake in a joke such as this: Mr. Tanaka, who is late for the executive meeting, is rushing into a conference room where his colleagues have been kept waiting. He opens the door of the room, saying, "You are early, Sirs." All in the room respond, "We are not early, Mr. Tanaka. You are late."

Translation or transposition might not be so difficult when an equivalent relationship between what is expressed in a language and the culture exists in another culture. What happens, however, if an equivalent relationship does not exist in another culture or in another age even of the same culture? What is required in such cases is not to fabricate the similar relationship so that the meaning in one culture or one age fits all the other cultures and ages, but to find new meanings which are on the right track of the intentions and meanings handed down from culture to culture and from age to age and to add them to what has been handed down.

Jesus' teaching in the Gospels tells us all we need to know to be an authentic Christian, some might say. For example, Jesus says in Matthew 22 : 39, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." To proclaim repeatedly this golden principle is one thing and to carry out this principle in actual situations is totally another. In Luke 10 : 25 -37, the lawyer's question reflects this difference and Jesus gives an example how to carry out this principle. What is unfortunate to those who claim that all we have to do is written in the Bible, however, is that Jesus did not give instructions on what to do in all possible cases in which we are supposed to love our neighbors. What can we do then? We must discover for ourselves what action is the most appropriate in order to love our neighbors in each particular situation. And since every human life and situation is particular, appropriateness of actions has to be evaluated in each occasion. It is to be noted here that applying basic rules in actual situations *always* requires us to understand the nature of each particular human situation, but that this does not

mean to ignore the existence of basic rules. In this sense, reluctance to act quickly according to the basic rules or diversity of opinions concerning how to act because of the difficulty in understanding and assessing the nature of particular situations should never be confused and misunderstood as denial or rejection of the basic rules.

The Catholic church seems to have been long aware of the significance of the entire process of understanding, interpretation of the Word of God in the past and its application in every particular place and age, and to have explicitly recognized that what the Christian church has been handing down from generation to generation is not only the Bible itself, but also the whole history of how believers have been responding to the divine work in this world. Each generation and each believer learned from what was handed down to them and created new steps by adding new understandings, by remedying, by reformulating what has been revered in their community. At each stage of history, believers struggled for more and better understandings of the divine message in the Bible, tried to judge which understanding to accept and which not to, and to formulate or reformulate their community. And very significantly, we believe that, even though the process of development was not always smooth but rather zigzag, detouring, rugged and swamped, God has been always working through the entire process to help us keep walking and to guide our moves from His eternal perspective.

The meaning of being an authentic Catholic is not the same through all ages. What it should mean to be an authentic Catholic has always to be struggled for at each moment of our life on the basis of adequate analysis of what it meant in the past. To say that it should be searched *on the basis of* what it has been meaning in the past does not mean that the way Catholics used to be at a certain age in certain circumstances should be kept unchanged. On the other hand, to say that the meaning of being an authentic Catholic is not the same through all ages does not mean that it has to be always changing. Something had better be kept unchanged. But, judgment whether something should be kept unchanged at this moment or not has to be made only after serious investigation of the human situation in the contemporary world, in its relation to the past. Nothing should be kept unchanged either because some, who are usually classicists, believe that a certain part of the Catholic church should never be considered to be changeable or because it seems a nuisance and painful to admit the fact that, since there is growth and development in the church and in the human world, constant efforts to adjust the role of each Christian to the changing world are always needed. If something is kept unchanged, it is to be so because we have reevaluated, by way of

honest study of the past and present of this world, that the way it has been is appropriate in a new context, too.

### **3. What is the Fundamental Role of Being Catholic ?**

#### **(i) The Relation Between the Religious Dimension and Other Dimensions in the Human Life**

When we proclaim our identity as Catholic, what is that for? Is that to draw a clear line between those who belong to the Catholic church and those who do not and to keep the distance between the two groups so that Catholics may not become polluted by the germ in the non-catholic society? Is it for us to boast our tradition? Is it to create a wall between Catholics and non-Catholics and to say, "You, non-Catholics, go your own way. We go our own. So, let us not bother to interfere with each other?" These are not, of course, the intentions of confirming our identity as Catholic. If not these, then what?

The fundamental role of being Catholic is, I believe, to proclaim the Good News to the world and to cooperate with divine grace so that the process of the Redemption can be advanced. The Redemption, which was brought forth through the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, is the Redemption of 'the world.' In this sense, the value of the proclaiming community called the Catholic church is to be assessed, first of all, in terms of its members' efforts to become involved in all dimensions of this world so that all parts of the human society become able to function in the better way than in the hypothetical state in which no sin exists. Faith, hope and charity are what Christians are supposed to communicate to all those who live in this world, and the first step of communication begins with reflected affirmation of what we believe. The goal of affirmation of what we believe and of realizing the difference among denominations and from other religions, again however, is not to have a self-satisfied feeling about what we believe and to claim that we are different from others with an exclusive tone and behavior. The goal is, first and last, to share the gifts given to us with all our neighbors. In order to communicate and share faith, hope and love, what is required for us is to attain a profound grasp of the relation between what we believe and what is actually going on in this world.

The religious dimension in human life is not an isolated dimension from other ones, even though it is distinguished. Unless we know how the religious dimension is

related to other dimensions, proclaiming what we believe is just like talking about the shape, color and material of a steering wheel which is not attached to a car body. A steering wheel is useless, except as a toy for children, unless it is assembled into the rest of a car so that the car can be moved in the direction the driver intends. Likewise, religion is meaningful as religion only when it functions as a part of the whole of the human world. It is not often asked, however, whether the religious dimension is functioning in relation to other dimensions in our life. It takes time in many cases to notice that going to church and attending Mass diligently do not necessarily mean that the religious dimension in our life is well functioning as the foundation of all the other dimensions.

One of the ways of telling whether the religious dimension is functionally operating in our life or not is to try to explain what we believe to those who have no knowledge about our religion without using any 'religious' word, so to speak, even without using the word 'God.' For example, how can we explain 'salvation' in non-religious words? "Salvation means that we are saved," some might answer in the similar way as a cheap dictionary does. "From what are we saved, then?" "From our sinful state." "What does 'sin' mean?" etc. What is discovered through the conversation with those who have very little idea about our religion is that we are unaware of the fact that we can use and are actually using many 'religious' words, but we know very little explanatory meaning of those. The significance to distinguish 'understanding how to use words' from 'understanding the *explanatory* meaning of those words,' in other words, 'understanding the relationship between things the words denote in their functional relation to other things' is described by Plato as Socrates' conversations.

One of the advantages of Christians in the countries where the number of Christians is very small is that everyday they face the situation in which they have to explain what they believe and experience in words non-Christians can understand. They are more aware of the problem, concerning the gap between using words without knowing the explanatory meaning of those words and having an adequate grasp of the explanatory meaning of them, than Christians in countries where the majority of the population are Christians, because through their everyday experiences they know that once they begin to share their religious life with non-Christians using 'religious' words, the audience loses interest in listening to them. Talking something in words only the speaker can understand means requiring the listener to make efforts to know the meanings of those words in order for the conversation to keep going, and sounds

haughty to the listener even if the speaker is unwitting of it. And as far as the speaker is tainted with arrogance, those listening do not make such efforts unless they are anxious enough already to listen to the divine message. In the business conversation among those who have no common language, it is the selling side that is supposed to prepare interpreters. If someone wants to sell something, he has to find, first of all, a certain means to understand the buyer's language. Do we Christians owe any obligation to non-Christians, just like salesmen who want to sell their merchandise? Yes, we do in the sense that our hearts are under the joyful compulsion to share faith, hope and love poured into our hearts by God with our neighbors.

It is true that there is a domain which non-religious language can never express. But it is also true that there are a lot of things in our religion which can be explainable with non-religious language. Therefore, the existence of the domain which only those who experience things in that domain can understand (for example 'contemplation') is not to be used as an excuse for our making no effort to communicate what is explainable with non-religious language to those who do not share the same experience.

If we cannot explain our religious dimension of life to those who have not shared the same experience with the language they can understand, the chances are that we cannot relate the religious dimension to other dimensions in our own life.

Another way of telling whether what we believe is functioning as the actual foundation of all our actions is to say nothing about the fact that we are Christians to those who have not known us before and to see whether they become attracted by our way of living and interested in what we think and believe. If all of our actions are, in fact, penetrated by faith, hope and love, no one can remain indifferent to the foundation of our actions. If not, advertising ourselves as Christians does nothing less than harm.

## **(ii) The Role of Catholic Universities**

How, then, can we understand the religious dimension and other dimensions in our own lives and moreover the relationship between our religion and the rest of the world? Inquiry in our daily life makes it possible. However, since the world situation has been becoming ever more complex, time and place becomes necessary when and where we can devote ourselves to concentrated, intensive but at the same time vast, extensive studies of the relationship between our belief and the world. The complexity

of the problems in the contemporary world demands professionals who devote themselves more to theoretical (explanatory) inquiry than attainment of practical skills to handle concrete and particular situations. Hence Catholic (Christian) universities.

What makes Catholic (Christian) universities differ from other universities is their emphasis on the role of their religion in the world. Catholic universities claim that their religion is the starting point and gist of all their inquiries. What then makes Catholic universities differ from seminaries? First, Catholic universities hold that study of their religion is the 'central' but still 'part' of all inquiries. In this sense, it is not without reason that the theology department is most important for a Catholic university but it is still one of the many departments. To say that the theology department is one of the many departments does not mean that theology is evaluated less important than in seminaries where theology, religious education, pastoral ministry, etc. are the major or only subjects that are being taught. It means that Catholic universities put more emphasis on the functional relationship between theology and all the other subjects. Also contemporary problems demand 'professional,' 'interdisciplinary' and 'cooperative' studies. Such works become possible in the settings where scholars and students in different fields can exchange the fruits of their studies on the daily basis without need of planning any special occasion to do interdisciplinary talk so that each scholar and student can pursue his/her specialized study as a functioning part of the organic whole of the entire human inquiries on everything that exists.

Secondly, the difference between Catholic universities, especially theology departments in Catholic universities and seminaries may be compared to the difference between foundational medicine and clinical medicine. The main objective of the foundational medicine is to make theoretical inquiries into the relationship among human physical functions, virus and chemicals, whereas clinical medicine deals with how to apply the results of foundational medicine in actual cases. Foundational medicine starts with the data of disease provided by clinical study, but the role of clinical medicine is very limited without basic research in foundational medicine. Likewise, the relationship between theologians and those who are engaged in pastoral works is similar to that between researchers of foundational medicine and practicing physicians. The difference between researchers of foundational medicine and practicing physicians is that what the latter is supposed to do is to learn what was found by the former through research and to apply the learned knowledge in their diagnoses and treatments of actual cases. Differentiation of foundational medicine from clinical

medicine and practicing medicine is necessary because no one can do all of these by himself.

Nowadays the differentiation of roles is demanded and advanced more than ever in the entire history of the church. The time has passed when bishops and priests were simultaneously theologians. It is hardly possible today for one person to serve as a fulltime scholar in addition to a fulltime pastoral worker or administrator, because of the complexity and immensity of contemporary problems and the development of theology. The time has gone when Catholics could presume that priests could answer almost all the major problems concerning their religious life. Today those who intend to be engaged in pastoral ministry have to admit that what they study for three to five years in the seminaries is a very brief summary of a part of what professional theologians are doing, while scholars have to recognize that their research always has to take into consideration the actual situation reported by those who are ministering.

#### **4. What is the Importance of the Academic Freedom ?**

I would like to discuss at this point the problem concerning the academic freedom of Catholic universities. To my very limited knowledge, what underlies the proposed Vatican regulations that all teachers of theology would be required to have a license, or mandate from church authorities, the local bishop, or the Vatican seems to be the fear of confusion caused by diverse results of theological research. In order to avoid the confusion among the faithful, therefore, it seems to be said that church authorities, the local bishops or the Vatican should control what theologians do, more specifically suspend them from teaching at Catholic schools or deprive them of their teaching positions if theologians say or write what seems to cause confusion among the faithful. If my interpretation of the proposed Vatican regulation is correct, I cannot but ask the following questions.

1. If the local bishops and the Vatican want to control what theologians say and write, the first thing they have to do would be to understand all of the theologians works correctly because evaluation becomes possible only after adequate study of the works. There is common agreement in the academic procedure if one wants to object another's opinion or to evaluate his entire works. **i)** We have to read all the works in which the theories with which we disagree are expressed. If the evaluation of the author as a scholar is concerned, it is of course required for the evaluator to read and



understand correctly all the works the author to be evaluated has ever written in his life. It is out of the question to substitute summaries of the works of the author written by others. **ii)** We have to study all the references to and evaluations of the works made by other scholars. **iii)** We have to explain, in a subscribed written form, why and at which point we disagree to the theories of the author as clearly, reasonably and creatively as possible, and to give the author chances to rebut. Subscription of the name of the objector or evaluator is indispensable so that the author can call the person who objects or evaluates him to account when he finds misunderstandings about his works or ambiguity in the objector's argument. No one is allowed to accuse anyone without giving his name or with substituting the name of the group, or department he belongs to in order to avoid his individual responsibility to receive rebuttal. Unless the Vatican or bishops can follow this procedure, their attempts to suspend theologians whose opinions they do not like cannot but be interpreted as abuse of the power of authority. To silence theologians using the fear of being suspended not through appropriate arguments but through power would not be a very noble thing for Christians to do and would do an enormous harm in the long run.

2. What is wrong with 'confusion'? It seems to me that confusion is quite a healthy phenomena in the process of development of the human world. Because of confusion, people asked many questions and struggled to solve the problems, and it is such struggle that has moved human history forward, has widened the horizon of human knowledge, and has promoted the development of the human world. Where there is nothing contradictory, there is no development. For example, if there had been no contradictory opinions concerning the relationship between the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit in church history, there would be no Nicene Creed. In the midst of the confusion, no one knows which direction is absolutely correct, but we know that the best strategy to face the confusion is to let all opinions be spoken out, no matter how contradictory and inappropriate some opinions seem to be. For some opinions may sound strange because they are too advanced and revolutionary for those whose intellectual horizon is narrower than that of those who advocate new opinions, and we can learn a lot from the mistakes made in the past if we take the nature of the dialectics seriously. If we believe in the historical, not mechanical, growth of the church, and admit that no one can get out of the limitation of the age he lives in, how could we dare to eliminate the significant factor of growth by not allowing all opinions to be spoken out? The very reason why universities in democratic countries cling to

academic freedom is because they know that allowing people to ask whatever they want to ask and to hold diverse opinions is the energy to move the turbine of the development of the human world.

I admit the significance of the magisterium and catechism in the Catholic church. However, unless the role of the magisterium and catechism is understood as the means through reflecting on and discussing which the dialectical process of development becomes enhanced, and if they are used as the means to oppress those who have contradictory opinions, the Catholic church will stop its growth. It is easy to say that we do not like someone's opinion, but very difficult to explain 'why' we do not like it or 'why' it is, we think, mistaken. It is a common experience among students, I presume, that in the very beginning of the scholarly training they have a tendency to be hasty in judging the value of theories they read without understanding the content of them very well. They are trained, little by little, not to judge any theory even if they feel that something in the theory is mistaken, unless they can clearly explain 'why' so. It often takes tremendous time for them to find and argue about the reason of someone's mistakes, and to their surprise, they realize that through the analysis of the questions asked in the theory and the mistaken answers, they can learn best. Considering the above, it becomes clear that the reason why the Academy has the above rules is because they know that disagreements of opinions promote human understanding when they are exchanged by the rule to respect opinions one another, while they cause only troubles if we do not know the nature of the dynamism of human understanding.

If the Vatican and bishops worry that the faithful get confused with diverse opinions it should be instructed that believers have to stop thinking that confusion is a bad thing and indulging themselves in simply awaiting answers to their questions being given always from the platforms without trying themselves to participate in the struggle of finding answers to the problems the world carries, because the world situation does not allow us to be Christians who cannot move unless they are taught how to move by others. Considering that religion makes sense only insofar as it is connected with all the other parts of the human world, each believer has to realize that it is not simply bishops priests but each believer who are called to participate in struggles for possible steps for the full actualization of the Kingdom of God, that each of us needs to make possibly best efforts to be an expert in the role he is called for so as to make constructive contributions to the world, and that it is the deep respect for

those who are called for roles other than one's own that makes all the roles function smoothly and dynamically. In this respect, there is no role any longer in which one can teach but not be taught.

## **5. The Current Problems of Catholic Education**

### **(i) The Nature of Learning**

Let me here turn to the problem of Catholic education.

Are all students entering Catholic colleges aware of the basic task they are expected to do, that is, seeking for the meaning of being an authentic Catholic in this world? Unfortunately, the answer seems to be no. It is partly because since Catholic children are usually baptized without their own consent, their belonging to Catholic church does not necessarily correspond to their becoming aware of their responsibility and of the need of reflection over what they believe. How, then, can they become awakened to be 'active' Catholics? Some may say that they have to be trained through more rigid catechism instruction. Some would say that more intensive discipline of prayer is of first import. Others might propose to promote programs of children's voluntary activities, etc. I admit that all of these are good and helpful suggestions, and that they have been actually helping children grow as Catholics. However, there is a condition that needs to be considered in order for the good suggestions to be able to work adequately. What is the condition? The condition is that children have enough experience about the joy of discovery in their lives.

Children learn very little unless they become interested in what they are trying to learn. No matter how good the teaching materials are, what enters children's ears is nothing but sound waves unless they become attracted to what their teachers are saying. "Well, then, let us scold children when we find their minds wandering during class and force them to pay attention to what teachers say," some might say. But many experienced teachers would say, "Sorry, but it won't work." Children's attention can be enhanced by nothing but the spontaneous mental move that happens in children's own minds. This spontaneous mental move by which children become attentive happens when they are encouraged to ask questions about things which they are interested in.

Most of those who have a certain amount of teaching experience have experiences, I presume, such that students' eyes suddenly began to shine when they switched

the topic in class from, say, 'formula giving roots of quadratic equation' to the story about the discovery of 'zero' in India or to the story of 'Möbius band,' from 'the structures of D.N.A. and R.N.A.' to 'mechanism of conception,' or from 'form criticism of the Bible' to 'the story of Galileo Galilei.' What is the difference between topics attractive to students and topics boring to them? Topics are attractive which inspire wonder in children's minds or which is closely connected with their immediate concern, while topics are boring which do not appeal to their imagination or which are remote from their current concerns.

It is true that children have to learn basic material whether they like it or not. They have to learn by any means how to read, write, calculate, etc. But, it is also true that whether children attain working knowledge (by 'working' knowledge I would like to mean knowledge we do not 'memorize' but 'understand') and keep learning for their life through or not depends on how well parents and teachers understand the tremendous influence the joy of discovery have in each child's mental growth, and therefore how seriously they can treat children's immediate concerns and wonders and help them widen their horizon of concern by relating bit by bit what is immediate to them to what is remote to them.

The strongest motif of learning is the joy of discovery; the joy of discovery fills children's hearts and minds most when they find answers to questions they themselves began and want to ask (not questions teachers and parents expect students to ask); and the closer to children's immediate concern the topics are, the more questions about the topics they ask spontaneously. The more children, especially in their early age (from infancy roughly through the ninth grade), are encouraged to ask whatever kind of questions they are interested in and to seek after the answers themselves, the more often they experience the joy of discoveries. The point to note is that what is at stake here is experience of joyful 'feeling' itself and not the 'content' of inquiry through which children experience joy of discovery. The content of inquiry is important, of course, but ten chances per day of experiencing joy of discovery concerning things which look trifling to adults are no match for ten chances per year of asking questions which sound important to adults, in terms of the significance of influence they exert on children's mental development.

Parents and teachers often become irritated with the delay of the time children stop wondering about trivial matters, which do not contribute directly to the better grade in school, and begin to ask more 'good' questions, which adults are eager to

answer. But it rarely happens that children suddenly begin to ask questions adults are more concerned about. Children have to be allowed first to indulge themselves in their own world of interest, however small it may be, to accumulate enough experience of joy of discovery, because only the joy of discovery motivates children to learn and come to ask questions about things which are remote from their immediate world. Very often questions children ask need a lot of knowledge to be adequately answered and they have to be taught to be patient in learning boring stuff to answer the questions they really want to find answers to. But in this regard also, children who have more experience of joy of discovery in their early age are more likely to endure the long boring process of accumulation of knowledge necessary to answer the question they are asking than those who do not, because through their experience they can anticipate that the more difficult questions are, that is, the more learning about things which are not interesting the questions demand, the greater joy of discovery they will have.

**(ii) Common Misconceptions on the Nature of 'Asking Questions' and the Function of 'Belief'**

One of the most basic rules in education seems to be to let children ask, in principle, *any* kind of question they want to ask. If they are discouraged to ask certain kinds of questions, their mental growth will be impeded from the area about which they are discouraged to ask questions. To force children to confine their interest in certain area by discouraging their asking questions is similar to keeping them inside of the house for fear that they will get injured. They may get injured less often, but their mental growth will be crippled. Religious education is no exception to this rule. To some, especially to those who were educated according to the classicists' method of education, allowing children to ask any question does not seem to be a good way to motivate children to become interested in their religion. They might object that if they are allowed to ask anything, children would never become interested in their religious tradition. But the fact seems to be that the more questions children ask, no matter what they may ask, the more likely they begin to ask questions about God. This is because questions all human beings ask are structured towards the divine mystery, whether inquirers are aware of it or not. If adult Catholics would like their children to be aware of the value of the tradition in which they have been brought up and to make a creative contribution to the church and the world, they have to allow them to ask anything about anything, including what they believe.

Allowing everyone to ask any question about what he believes--does it not destroy his faith and identity as a Catholic? No, it does not. Since this seems to me a crucial point in the religious education, let me explain some common misunderstandings through examples. I happened to have a chance to hear a conversation between a nun, who had been teaching catechism at a Catholic high school for more than thirty years, and a priest, who was her spiritual director.

Sister A: "Father, I am wondering what is happening to today's kids. They are very hard to teach."

Father B: "In what sense do you think your students are hard to teach?"

Sister A: "When I teach, say, one chapter from a catechism, they respond to me with ten questions I cannot answer. Children of their parents' generation were more obedient and meek and never asked such stupid questions as my students do. Today's kids do not seem to have been taught at home about obedience to their teachers and about the importance of accepting the teaching of the church without always having to ask questions."

Father B: "Well, it seems to me that religious life of your current students is more healthy than that of your former students decades ago."

Another example, which I faced as a teaching assistant in a theology/philosophy course for college freshmen, is the opposite case from the above.

Student C: "(To student D, who said that he believes in miracles described in the Bible,) How can you believe in things we cannot explain reasonably?"

Student D: "I don't know, but I simply believe in them."

Student C: "You aren't answering my question."

What is common in the above two cases, which may appear totally different from each other, is the misunderstanding about 'the structure of belief' and the confusion of 'the source of belief in what others say' with 'the intelligibility of the content of belief.' ('Belief' is to be distinguished, in this context, from 'faith,' and defined as *'assent to the truthfulness of propositions which express certain understanding*

*made by others.*' For example, we believe that the Pacific Ocean is bigger than the Atlantic Ocean. How can we know that? The usual answer is that we know that because on maps the area named the Pacific Ocean is bigger than the area labeled the Atlantic Ocean. Well, then, how can we know that maps are correct? Because we believe in the correctness of the surveys done by surveyors.) The presupposition sister A holds is that once we believe in something we should not ask questions about the content of what we believe. The presupposition student C has is that we should not believe anything until we can reasonably explain the content of belief. Both of these presuppositions are mistaken, in a sense that in their thinking 'believing' contradicts 'understanding or asking questions of content of belief.' In fact, 'believing' does not contradict 'understanding or asking questions of what is believed,' as described in John Henry Newman's *A Grammar of Assent*. Why? Because the source of belief is *not* understanding of the content of belief. We believe certain propositions not because we have explanatory understanding about what we believe or we are sure of the correctness of those propositions, but because we know that it is worthwhile borrowing knowledge attained by others. Belief is one of the most fundamental factors that makes the human world function and it is the existence of the structure of belief that makes possible for all human beings to share knowledge, to cooperate with one other. In all dimensions of our life, we depend on knowledge attained by others and trust in the truthfulness of their knowledge. Without belief, as a matter of fact, we cannot live even a moment. However, we rarely notice the significance of the role of belief, because we take it for granted in our daily life, just as we usually do not pay attention to the existence and the role of air in our physical life.

One of the most important characteristics of the nature of belief is that belief is based on the judgment of value of sharing knowledge, and *not* on understanding the content of belief. In this sense it is not unreasonable for us to believe in something we, believers, cannot give a reasonable explanation to. The original knower must be able to explain his knowledge in detail, but believers do not necessarily have to do so. Conversely, that belief is not based on believers' understanding of the content of belief means that asking questions to understand what we believe does not destroy our belief. It is quite natural for believers to ask questions about what they are believing. Unless we grasp these characteristics unambiguously, we would have to oppress all questions for fear of destroying our beliefs.

Religious belief is one of the forms of belief. Since it is the same, in terms of

its basic nature as belief, as other kinds of belief we have in our life, the characteristics explained above do apply to religious belief also. In the case of religious belief, what we believe is what has been revealed by God, and what makes us assent to what has been revealed is 'faith' given to us and *not* understanding of what has been revealed. (For example, we believe in the Holy Trinity without knowing its meaning adequately.) Student C is mistaken in this point. Conversely again, since religious belief does depend on faith and not on understanding of the reasonableness of the belief, asking questions about what we believe does not lead to denial or negation of our belief. Sister A's argument is mistaken in this point. It seems to sister A that asking questions, especially questions she cannot handle, leads to threatening of her students' religious belief. The fact is that it does not. On the contrary, it seems that the more questions we ask, the more solid our belief becomes. For faith invites questions about the content of what we believe and by way of asking questions human minds grow more and more towards the divine mystery. The intelligibility of the divine mystery is beyond human intellectual ability, but it means not that the divine mystery excludes our attempts to understand it even in a very limited sense, but that all human beings are invited to continue ever to grow through ceaseless longing for the fullness of the divine knowledge.

### **(iii) The Basic Role of Religious Education**

What religious education does is basically two things: to inform children of what has been handed down in the church *and* to help children grow, by encouraging them to ask questions, in their awareness of the value of what they inherit and of their responsibility to make their religious belief function as the beacon in the process of the development of the human world. Some might be afraid of what happens if students ask questions too advanced or complicated for teachers to answer. Will students lose their trust in their teachers? I do not think so. There are two ways to respond to students who ask questions too difficult for their teachers to answer. One way is to discourage them to ask such questions at all. Another is to admit frankly that they do not know answers to them and to encourage students to keep searching for the answers themselves so that they become able to teach the next generation what they find. Through our own experience we know which kind of teacher we love and respect more, and through which kind of attitude we become inspired to dedicate our life to the growth of the church and the world.



Because human understandings are always influenced by the presuppositions of particular time and place inquirers belong to, no teacher can claim that his or her answer to a certain question is the only correct one which has to be accepted by everyone with unquestioning obedience. Also since human understandings keep changing, always ahead is there possibility of development of the human world and of the role the Christian message plays in it. Taking this point into consideration, we become obliged to be humble about the understandings we have attained by now and serious about reflecting on the role and nature of the Catholic education from now on.

Ten, twenty, thirty and forty years later, the world situation will become more and more complex. If we really love our children and hope that they can play major roles, through their belief in the Christian message, to promote the human good in this world, we have to trust in the potentiality for authentic growth as human beings, which no one but children themselves can actualize. And such a trust is embodied best in our respect and encouragement of children's desire to ask questions. If, since allowing children to ask anything about anything sounds very risky, the Catholic education keeps children always in a passive state in which they receive what is given from teachers, whether they like it or not, and are not encouraged to ask questions about what they believe, what remains in their memory, no matter how precious it is, will be of very little use in their life outside of the church buildings and it is not so hard to imagine that the role of Christians, in the entire human world, who are educated under such a fear of taking a risk will be a quite limited one.

What I have written about the education of Catholic children holds true with that of Catholic adults.

Reflecting on the situation of the current Catholic church from the historical perspective, it seems to me that the Catholic church today can be compared to a family which has problems too serious for parents by themselves to solve and needs help from their adolescent children. Until the second Vatican council, lay people were regarded to be like small children in a stable family, who get unambiguous instructions from their parents. Those who were in charge of teaching taught what lay people were to do and required lay people to obey their instructions. However, as time went on, the church has been growing in its size and its nature. The complex development of the world demanded the growth of lay people, and lay people grew to meet the demand. Lay people, like adolescents in a troubled family, now want to participate in tackling the difficult problems that the church and the world face. When they were mere

children, their parents solved almost all problems for them, and all they had to do was to obey their parents and to accept what their parents gave them, but now they want to face the world themselves standing by and cooperating with their parents. They still need instructions from their parents, but what they need more is parents' hope and encouragement for them to speak their own opinions as partners of their parents, however immature they seem to be to their parents. When Children are told, "Just do what you are ordered to do without asking questions why you have to do so. The problems are too difficult for you to poke your nose into!", it might cause a deep suspicion in their mind on the fundamental meaning of their relationship with their parents, because they sense, through such a rejection of their awareness of the problems and their eagerness to be of help to finding solutions, their parents' mistrust in their role in the family and ability to cope with problems in the world. It is easier for parents just to give orders to their children and force their blind obedience than to help them grow as their indispensable partners, but those who take the easier way are doomed to recognize, sooner or later, that taking the easier way costs much later.

## **6. How can We Distinguish Authentic Movements of the Human World from Unauthentic Ones ?**

Finally, let me return to the question I left untouched. From the 'historical' view of the human world, there is no normative culture with which all other cultures have to conform, or there are no normative (human) products, the natures of which undergo no change through the age. However, there is a direction the movements of the human world along which is called authentic. Then the question becomes, "How can we know about the direction and tell authentic movement of the human world from unauthentic one?" The answer would be that we can know about the direction the human world authentically moves through the analysis of one thing which is invariant in the human world regardless of time and place. What is it, then?

To my best knowledge, the only thing which is invariant in the world of human being and serves as the criterion of authenticity is the human cognitional structure, the nature of which is known by answering a question, "What are we doing when we know something?" It is far beyond the scope of this paper to summarize its nature and it is virtually impossible to do so because the nature of the cognitional structure can never be understood as it is unless each individual spends enough time in analyzing it

in his or her own conscious experience. To use an analogy, memorizing a summarized theory of the nature of the human cognition is to understanding its nature and verifying its existence in our own conscious experience as memorizing theories how to swim is to making the theories as our own by moving our bodies in the water. It needs scarcely be said that what is of primary import is making the theory as our own in our own experience. Accordingly, all I can do as a conclusion of this paper is to suggest how crucial it will be for each of us to understand the nature of the human cognitional structure and verify its existence in our own conscious experience as the key to the future constitution of the human world and of the Catholic church, by enumerating several characteristics of the cognitional structure in its relation to other things from the heuristic point of view and to expect that readers of this article become interested in and begin to ask questions about it.

The human cognitional structure is a basic human nature ; it is always working in each individual human being, whether he notices about it or not ; it is invariant regardless of time and place ; it is the source of identity of things and the criteria of authenticity ; it is the source of all human activities ; it is the axis of the dialectical development of the human world ; it is what relates the natural and the supernatural ; it is the door to the divine mystery.

Products of the cognitional structure vary depending on how it works and what it works with. Through understanding its nature, it becomes possible for us to relate different cultures in different ages as a functional whole of the world of human beings and to attain better recognition about the relationship between God, human beings and the natural world, and better understanding of our whence and our whither.

Thanks to its existence, changes in the world of human beings are not relative, pointless and drifting. It is the cognitional structure that relates things that appear to have nothing to do with one another, that gives direction towards which the human world should move, and that is the most basic criterion to assess values of human activities.

Study of its nature relates religion with the rest of culture ; it is the core of education ; enables those who are engaged in different tasks to cooperate with each other ; it makes possible to relate different opinions to one another and to explain why they are different and which opinion is correct and which is not ; relates different religions to one another ; it relates theology to physics, chemistry, biology, zoology, psychology, sociology, political science, art, literature, and all other sciences.

As a final note, providing that readers of this article become interested in studying the nature of the human cognitional structure, there is a help available. Maybe, suffice to mention the title of one book : Bernard Lonergan, *Insight, a Study of Human Understanding* (1957).

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